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## COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR THE TREATMENT OF IMMUNE RELATED DISEASES

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Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to compositions and methods useful for the diagnosis and treatment of immune related diseases.

Background of the Invention

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Immune related and inflammatory diseases are the manifestation or consequence of fairly complex, often multiple interconnected biological pathways which in normal physiology are critical to respond to insult or injury, initiate repair from insult or injury, and mount innate and acquired defense against foreign organisms. Disease or pathology occurs when these normal physiological pathways cause additional insult or injury either as directly related to the intensity of the response, as a consequence of abnormal regulation or excessive stimulation, as a reaction to self, or as a combination of these.

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Though the genesis of these diseases often involves multistep pathways and often multiple different biological systems/pathways, intervention at critical points in one or more of these pathways can have an ameliorative or therapeutic effect. Therapeutic intervention can occur by either antagonism of a detrimental process/pathway or stimulation of a beneficial process/pathway.

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Many immune related diseases are known and have been extensively studied. Such diseases include immune-mediated inflammatory diseases, non-immune-mediated inflammatory diseases, infectious diseases, immunodeficiency diseases, neoplasia, etc.

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T lymphocytes (T cells) are an important component of a mammalian immune response. T cells recognize antigens which are associated with a self-molecule encoded by genes within the major histocompatibility complex (MHC). The antigen may be displayed together with MHC molecules on the surface of antigen presenting cells, virus infected cells, cancer cells, grafts, etc. The T cell system eliminates these altered cells which pose a health threat to the host mammal. T cells include helper T cells and cytotoxic T cells. Helper T cells proliferate extensively following recognition of an antigen-MHC complex on an antigen presenting cell. Helper T cells also secrete a variety of cytokines, i.e., lymphokines, which play a central role in the activation of B cells, cytotoxic T cells and a variety of other cells which participate in the immune response.

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Immune related diseases could be treated by suppressing the immune response. Using neutralizing antibodies that inhibit molecules having immune stimulatory activity would be beneficial in the treatment of immune-mediated and inflammatory diseases. Molecules which inhibit the immune response can be utilized (proteins directly or via the use of antibody agonists) to inhibit the immune response and thus ameliorate immune related disease.

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T cells play a central role in host defense. T cells are able to modulate the immune response of other cell lineages through the production of a variety of cytokines and immune modulatory molecules. In addition they are responsible for surveying cells throughout the organism for the presence of non-self. This highly sophisticated process utilizes the T cell receptor (TCR), which is able to recognize and discriminate